

Harold Arundel Moody and the League of Coloured Peoples*

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this article is to consider the activities of the League of Coloured Peoples (LCP), which played a significant role in British society from the 1930s through the 1940s in exposing racial discrimination against black people and in fostering pan-Africanism, as well as the ideas and actions of its Jamaican founder, Dr Harold Arundel Moody.

The pan-Africanists who lived in British society from the 1930s through the 1940s had to face, to a greater or a lesser extent, at least two questions. The first one was the emancipation of their black brothers overseas; the second was the improvement of the status of black people, and possibly the abolition of racial discrimination in Britain. However, as history clearly shows, the pan-Africanist movement would eventually morph in many ways

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into a huge wave of decolonisation-oriented nationalism in the wake of World War II, while the various issues of social racism surrounding black people in Britain would gradually be forgotten in the minds of pan-Africanists in Britain as secondary, if not trivial, problems (Duffield, 1981: 35-36).

However, for the pan-Africanists in the UK of the 1930s-1940s, a period marked by an important sense of duty where issues of persistent domestic racial discrimination were deemed on par with colonial ones overseas, Moody preferred to devote heart and soul mainly to improving interracial relationships within British society rather than engaging in decolonisation efforts overseas.

Between the domestic “colour question” and the “colonial question” overseas, which are the two questions pan-Africanists in Britain were grappling with, why did Moody choose to favour emphasis on the former rather than the latter, striving to eliminate racial discrimination in British society? Was it because of his reluctance or pessimism toward a movement of solidarity for Africans and people of African descent that reached beyond the limits of British society? Probably not. As much as any other pan-Africanists of his generation, Moody called for the need of strong solidarity among black people. By closely examining the relationship between Moody as a West Indian and British society where he lived at the time, rather than simply looking at his thoughts and beliefs, it is possible to identify the main reasons behind his efforts to improve the status of black immigrants within Britain, who represented, back then, a far greater minority than today, instead of engaging in colonial liberation in the West Indies and Africa.

First, this article briefly touches on Moody's upbringing, and then presents an overview of the founding of the LCP, as well as its activities and historical development. Next, it will discuss how Moody and the LCP came to make the improvement of race relations in British society their prime goal, by drawing a comparison with the West African Students' Union (WASU) founded by a Nigerian law student Ladipo Solanke in London in 1925.

The LCP and the WASU share many similarities: both have founders of African descent that came to study at the University of London; and both were racial organisations that focused on people of African descent and formed in London between the two World Wars. They both had their respective official journals, which were subscribed by people in wide areas including domestic Britain, North America, and Africa, and which functioned as important print media linking together black intellectuals from around the world. Both were also established, operating, or planning to establish their base of operations in London for people of African descent. Despite being initially nothing more than single society institutions whose primary purposes were assistance and friendship among their members, they eventually well exceeded their original framework, turning into organisations that played an important part in cultivating pan-African thought. However, as mentioned above, while the LCP made a major contribution in race in British society, the WASU became a breeding ground for many prominent nationalists that would guide colonial liberation movements in Africa. In this sense, the LCP and the WASU most certainly can be defined as pan-Africanist organisations that sharply contrasted with

each other.

2. The “Service” to the Black Race

Moody was born on 8 October 1882 in the town of Kingston, on the southern coast of Jamaica, in the Caribbean, exactly five years before the birth, in St. Ann’s Bay, on the northern part of the island, of Marcus Aurelius Garvey, who would later leave a great mark on pan-Africanism. Moody’s mother was a pure black woman without scholastic education who worked as a servant in the house of a white family from an early age. On the other hand, his father was a mulatto, a mixed-race of black and white, who left behind his wife and children around the beginning of his marriage to work on the Panama Canal, before returning home to Kingston and achieving success by running a chemist and druggist business (Vaughan, 1950: 11-12).

After completing primary and secondary education in Kingston, Moody opened a small private school for a while, but became progressively more devoted to the activities of a congregational church at age 19. Next, he engaged in missionary work as a Sunday School teacher to children, and then, even though he was not paid, served in pastoral care in two branch churches. Through this experience, along with further establishing his evangelical faith, Moody notably and steadily cultivated his qualities as a speaker and preacher. Thereafter, and until his death, he continued to hold onto his rock-solid faith, never ashamed of the Gospel (Vaughan, 1950: 14-15).

Moody's devotion as a Christian turned out to have a big impact on his future trajectory, which I will describe below. First though, I would like to draw attention to the fact that his own establishment of Christian faith, following the British mission tradition, played a role in further indoctrinating in his heart his UK-oriented cultural identity, which was often seen as one of Jamaica's privileged elites at the time. In his youth, Moody did not show any hesitation to admit belonging to the black race, whether by "colour" or by "blood", but he had a deep admiration for Western culture, particularly British culture. By contrast, Moody kept a certain emotional distance from Africans and their culture, and sometimes even disdained them as people and a culture at a later stage of development (Geiss, 1974: 341). Then, his strong tendency of self-assimilation to British culture, as well as his superiority consciousness over Africans, partially reinforced, or was rather embodied, by the faith that had been cultivated through British Christian traditions.

However, the shock of racial discrimination Moody experienced first-hand after traveling to study in his British "fatherland", which is clearly associated with a situation that Franz Fanon would later describe as "Black Skin, White Masks" and which underlies cultural identity as a "black British subject", triggered a remarkable reaction. The first time Moody was faced with the reality that he might not be accepted as an equal human being with British or white people and of being unequivocally categorised by the colour of his black skin rather than by his abilities, lifestyle, or way of thinking, brought about confusion and disappointment, followed by intense resentment

against the colour bar.

In September 1904, Moody, under the influence of his father who was running a druggist business, travelled from Jamaica to Britain to study medicine at King's College, which was located in London's Strand. A few years later, Moody moved his educational headquarters to King's College Hospital in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Finally, in 1912, eight years after going to Britain, he successfully finished his course at the faculty of medicine and obtained his physician's credentials. He temporarily returned to Jamaica after graduation, only to go back to the UK. Life was relatively stable, and he aspired to become a hospital physician, as new career opportunities were opening for him, but the walls of discrimination in hospitals were thick, and his frustration eventually diverted him away from a career as a hospital physician. Then, following the recommendation of an acquaintance, he decided to become a general practitioner instead of a hospital physician and, in February 1913, opened a clinic in Peckham, in the South of London, where there were many low-income households. However, despite abandoning the path toward being a hospital doctor, Moody continued his research activities even during his busy life as a practitioner, without showing any decline in enthusiasm in medical research, before being finally awarded, in 1919, a long-sought medical doctorate from the University of London (Vaughan, 1950: 17-38).

During this period, Moody married a white woman in May 1913 over the objections of his peers, and soon became the father of four sons and two daughters. Moody also obtained key positions, such as Sunday School Superintendent and Church Treasurer, at the Clifton

Congregational Church and, in addition to his medical activities as a practitioner which grew robustly, was extremely busy with family and church life (Vaughan, 1950: 36-37).

Under these circumstances, in July 1919, shortly after the end of World War I, Moody temporarily returned home to Jamaica with his wife and children. The trip was originally meant as a homecoming journey to introduce his new family to his parents in Jamaica but, with the first return to his homeland in seven years, Moody was greatly shocked to witness Jamaica in deep economic and social devastation. At the time, Jamaica was struggling with several serious economic and social problems, such as lingering harsh working conditions associated with sugar cane and banana cultivation, a high illiteracy rate, appalling living conditions, alcohol dependency, and a remarkably low morale among the working class. Now able to view more objectively the situation in his homeland after living many years in the UK, Moody was exposed to the state of this diseased Jamaican society, which made him feel deeply distressed as a fellow man of the land (Vaughan, 1950: 40-42).

The many instances of racial discrimination Moody had experienced between the time he had established himself as a black physician in British society and the shock he received when he witnessed the economic and social devastation in his homeland of Jamaica were among the reasons that led him to gradually commit himself to working to improve the status of black people (Vaughan, 1950: 40-42). Then, as expected, Moody found the spiritual support he needed in his Christian faith to realise such a vision. Moody thought that he would devote his occupation to improving the status

of black people as a “service” to the race. Moody thought that, more than anything else, by providing this “service” to the race, his “service” to God would be fully expressed. As already described in detail, his Christian faith, cultivated according to British tradition, pulled young Moody away from the black race and influenced him to assimilate to the Western culture, which in a way was a negative effect. However, it is also what made him and directed him toward the black race, and what led him to devote his heart and soul to the resolution of various issues faced by black people.

It took 10 more years for Moody, through the creation of the LCP, to effectively crystallise his Christian humanitarian belief of realizing his “service” to God through offering his “service” to the discriminated against and repressed black race.

3. The Foundation and Development of the LCP

Early activities

In early 1931, a meeting was held at the Young Men’s Christian Association’s Hall, in the heart of London, with Charles Wesley, African-American Professor of History at Howard University, as a speaker. Moody, who attended the meeting after receiving an invitation, revealed to the audience a plan he had been harbouring for quite a long time. His proposal to create a new organisation rallying coloured people, with the aim to contribute to the improvement of the status of coloured people, was accepted with the support of many attendees that day. Then, a preparatory committee was formed to develop the proposal and, as a result of a

meeting held at Moody's house in Peckham on 13 March 1931, the LCP was formed (Vaughan, 1950: 54). Moody was 48 years old.

Thus, the newly created LCP listed the following four items as activities it aimed to achieve (Vaughan, 1950: 56):

To promote and protect the social, educational, economic and political interests of its members.

To interest members in the welfare of coloured peoples in all parts of the world.

To improve relations between races.

To co-operate and affiliate with organisations sympathetic to coloured peoples.

However, for a while after formation, the organisation's basis for its activities was extremely fragile, as it had a rather limited number of members and revenue generated from its membership fees. Therefore, it could not develop any substantial activities toward meeting the goals it had listed at its founding.

Under these circumstances, one of the first activities the LCP undertook to achieve its goals was the publication of a periodical: *The Keys*. According to the opening issue launched in July 1933, the name *The Keys* was meant to symbolically express the contributions of the organisation toward meeting the goal the LCP envisioned and sought to achieve: the opening of doors closed to coloured peoples and the harmonious co-operation of the races. It is also said that the inspiration first came from a prominent African educator James E. K. Aggrey, who advocated for cooperation of the

races and who stated: "You can play a tune of sorts on the black keys, and you can play a tune of sorts on the white keys, but for harmony you must use both the black and the white."¹ Despite changing names several times later on, the periodical continued to be published intermittently for nearly 20 years and started to fulfil the function of an important print medium that would not only lay out the activities or claims of the LCP,² but also widely inform people inside and outside of the UK about various issues and events surrounding the black race around the world. Moreover, the periodical connected subscribing black and white intellectual elites around the world and earned high praise both at home and abroad as a journal activating mutual enlightenment and opinion exchange on racial and colonial issues. Circulation was not always stable, but it reached at least 2,000 copies the year following its launch, in 1934. Also, its subscription reach covered a rather wide range of areas, including India, the United States, the West Indies, the Union of South Africa, West Africa, East Africa and, it goes without saying, the UK.³

In addition, it is possible to infer the number of members, as well as their distribution, based on publications such as periodicals issued by the LCP in the 1930s. For example, according to the April-June 1936 issue, there were 262 members from the London headquarters at the time. It is also reported that LCP branches had been established in the port city of Cardiff, in South Wales, and in the port city of Liverpool, in Midwestern England - locations that were already seeing a rather large community of coloured immigrants - with the former reporting 178 members, and the latter reporting 34

members.⁴ The LCP also had several branches overseas, such as the British Guyana Branch, which reported 28 members in 1940.⁵ Then, although the number of members in these overseas branches is not necessarily clear, 349 members were registered in London headquarters in 1938,⁶ right before the beginning of World War II. After the start of the war, even though student membership had become stagnant due to the evacuation of London universities, membership in the UK as a whole instead rose sharply, notably due to an influx of wartime migrant workers from the West Indies. For example, membership numbers doubled during the one-year period between 1942 and 1943.⁷

Incidentally, while the LCP was indeed an organisation founded with the aim of rallying coloured people, it also opened membership to white people. In fact, many white intellectuals, such as Members of Parliament grappling with racial or colonial issues, people involved with the Colonial Office, and clerics or academics, appeared on the LCP's membership list. In particular, the proportion of white members was rather high during the period preceding World War II. As an example of membership in 1936, of the 262 members in the London headquarters, 163 were coloured people and 99 members were white people.⁸ However, it should be noted that, while the ratio of white people in the membership makeup of the LCP was originally rather high, leadership of the organisation's operations was consistently conducted by coloured people, especially African members. More specifically, the positions of executive members were almost entirely occupied by West Indians and West Africans, of which Moody was the prime example. Therefore, the high

proportion of white members had nothing to do with a strong white voice among the LCP, but was rather one manifestation of the stance of cooperation of the races advocated by Moody, or simply nothing less than a natural consequence thereof.

Until his death, during the 16 years following the formation of the LCP in 1931 at his own initiative, Moody was always at the forefront of the LCP's activities as its President and continued to devote his efforts to develop it, both morally and materially. Indeed, "the League was his life and it would not be untrue to say that he was the life of the League" (Vaughan, 1950: 55). However, even though Moody sacrificed half a lifetime to the development of the LCP, there was one time when he considered resigning from the office of the President. In October 1934, about three and a half years after the organisation's founding, Moody announced, through its periodical, that he intended to resign soon as President. The reasons for this sudden resignation announcement were regarded as personal, but judging from the wording of the resignation announcement, it can be easily inferred that Moody was clearly agonizing over fierce personal criticism directed against him and over a feud among African people, which had reinforced his intention to resign.⁹

It is believed that there were at least two reasons behind Moody's decision to resign as President of the LCP. First, there was visible conflict among the LCP's members over how to define the word "coloured peoples." Founder Moody's main thought was that "coloured peoples" should be interpreted narrowly and, although membership to the LCP was open to all races, he believed that the

main actors of the organisation should be people of African descent. On the other hand, several members thought that “coloured peoples” should be considered in a broader sense, by allowing Indians and Chinese living in Britain to actively join the LCP and participate in its operations. Also, at the general meeting held several months before the announcement of his resignation, a small number of Indian members strongly opposed organisational management led by people of African descent, and a fierce dispute took place between executives.¹⁰

Second, Moody was exposed to fierce criticism from the WASU concerning the establishment of a student hostel, known as Aggrey House. For some time, the Colonial Office had been moving ahead with a plan to establish a hostel for African students, the Aggrey House, in order to enhance the welfare programme proposed to students of African descent. Then Moody, who agreed with the spirit of the initiative, joined the establishment committee for the hostel and deployed great energy toward the implementation of the plan. However, even among some of London’s African students, there were some people who opposed the establishment of Aggrey House. In particular, the WASU, which had already been independently operating a similar hostel for African students, strongly rebuked the plan because it perceived the establishment of the hostel led under the initiative of the Colonial Office as a provocative move against the WASU’s own hostel and possibly as an interference from the British government and authorities in the independent running of the hostel by African students. In early 1934, the WASU rolled out an opposition campaign against the

establishment of the Aggrey House, through journals on West Africa and independently printed brochures, heavily denouncing Moody, one of the founding committee members, as a racial traitor who had become complicit in the machinations of the British government and authorities, despite his African descent.¹¹

Such criticism from West African students inside and outside the LCP, particularly the intense personal criticism that was possibly libellous, over the establishment of the hostel, greatly hurt Moody's self-esteem, who believed in his devotion to the black race. And while he was making a strong appeal for the need of racial cooperation between West Indians and Africans, he was led to express his decision to resign as President of the LCP. But eventually, the problem of Moody's resignation that occurred in late 1934 was resolved in 1935, when Moody was convinced by his entourage not to step down. Then the LCP, which had overcome this confusion early in its formation, steadily strengthened its organisational foundations under Moody's strong leadership and went on to expand and evolve its scope of activity from friendship among its existing members to various political issues.

The activities for the colour question

The first racial issue that the LCP tackled inside the UK was racial discrimination experienced by coloured sailors in Cardiff in 1935.

At the turn of the 19th century, Cardiff was nothing more than a small port town of only about 1,000 inhabitants. However, with the subsequent development of railway construction and port facilities, Cardiff saw, in the middle of that same pivotal century, a rapid

development as a base for occasional cargo ships, as well as a port for loading coal extracted nearby.

It was during World War I that migrant workers started to pour in the city from the West Indies and Africa. As a way of compensating for the labour shortage that occurred when white seamen were mobilised in the Navy at the beginning of the war, many coloured labourers engaged in the shipping industry began to migrate to Cardiff. These overseas migrant workers were welcomed by ship owners as an important labour force during the war and were guaranteed relatively high wages, while mainly boarding on ships intended for West African sea routes. However, when white seamen started getting demobilised at the end of the war, there was, in turn, an excess in labour in the shipping industry, and migrant workers were now regarded with hostility by the white workers who considered that they had stolen their jobs (Little, 1948: 78-79). This racial tension erupted in June 1919 in race riots between whites and non-whites, which led to a tragic development that produced a large number of casualties, notably through indiscriminate attacks launched on coloured people by the white mob.¹² And again thereafter, as the British shipping industry took a heavy blow and experienced even worse unemployment problems following the Great Depression of 1929, these racial conflicts long continued to smoulder as a destabilizing factor in Cardiff society.

Under these circumstances, in 1935, the British government promoted the rationalisation of the domestic shipping industry and, in order to strengthen its international competitiveness, launched a new system providing subsidies to ship owners reducing their

surplus, aging shipping capacity. However, with this British Shipping (Assistance) Act of 1935, owners who received a subsidy were obligated to preferentially hire seamen of British nationality. Incidentally, British colonial-born coloured labours at the time were, of course, in possession of a British passport, but the coloured seamen of Cardiff were frequently forced to be registered as aliens by the police, either because of the colour of their skin, despite being British passports holders, or because they were not in possession of valid proof of nationality or birth. For this reason, the coloured seamen, categorised as aliens, despite being British passports holders, started to suffer an unfair amount of discrimination over employment once the Act came into force (Little, 1948: 93-95).

Faced with this situation, the coloured seamen of Cardiff formed a trade union, called the Coloured Seamen's Union, to defend their rights and, while opposing racial discrimination on their own, requested cooperation and support from the LCP's headquarters in London to improve the situation. In response, the LCP dispatched two investigators to Cardiff in April 1935 and, in October of the same year, widely reported the situation of racial discrimination against the coloured seamen of Cardiff in its periodical, both domestically and abroad. Then, the LCP lobbied for elimination of this racial discrimination through parliamentary representation in Cardiff, which resulted in the recovery of original British national status for the British-colonial born African seamen who had been unfairly forced to register as aliens, which also led to some of them successfully securing employment.¹³ Based on the LCP's success

with resolving the seamen's employment problem in Cardiff, the LCP became recognised, both at home and abroad, as a sort of racial discrimination "watchdog" in the UK that would monitor racial trends and would actually develop support activities for coloured people, and more specifically people of African descent, when faced with racial discrimination.

On the other hand, the invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 by the fascist regime of Italy and the outbreak of World War II greatly raised the LCP's political consciousness. The LCP expanded and deepened its range of activities involving racial discrimination, by expanding to issues overseas and by addressing the political and economic aspects of discrimination instead of the just sociocultural ones.

The first racial issue tackled by the LCP after the war related to a racist commissioned officer in the British army. At the time, in the British army, officer positions were limited to people of European descent, even among British people. The LCP considered this process racist and, joining forces with the most radical pan-Africanist organisations, the WASU and the International African Service Bureau (IASB), lobbied the British government to pave the way for making the commissioning of officers possible for coloured British people as well. In October 1939, the Colonial Office made an official statement that the commissioning of officers would also be possible for non-European British people, but only in wartime (Macdonald, 1973: 300).

Encouraged by this success, the LCP next directed its activities to the issue of racially discriminatory employment of colonial government officials. In December 1939, an LCP delegation led by

Moody, along with MP Arthur Creech Jones of the Labour Party, visited the Colonial Secretary Malcom MacDonald and pointed out the current situation in which coloured people were often removed from consideration for official positions in the colonial government and requested an improvement of the situation from the Colonial Secretary. In response, the Colonial Secretary showed a certain understanding of the delegation's request and mentioned that he was willing to investigate the status of official employment in the colonial government and to change policy to eliminate any existence of the colour bar. However, as the Colonial Office never actively took any substantial steps to solve the problem, a hot debate on this issue raged anew in March 1941 between the LCP and the Colonial Secretary through a lively exchange of letters.¹⁴ However, there was a deep-rooted resistance in the Colonial Office to widely employing coloured people, including local ones, as colonial government officials. In the end, the LCP's request about this problem could not yield any tangible results conducive to improving the situation. That being said, the fact that the LCP focused on the issue of racial discrimination in the employment of colonial government officials and sought to resolve it clearly shows that the range of its activities had expanded. In addition, as the correspondence between the LCP and the Colonial Office was published in the LCP's periodical and subsequently picked up by several news agencies in Britain, one should not overlook the fact that public opinion was stirred up, and in no small way (Esedebe, 1973: 48).

In addition to the LCP's activities involving racial issues during World War II, the LCP supported activities for wartime volunteer

workers from the West Indies. While the British government mobilised people from the colonies at the outbreak of the war, it began to introduce volunteer workers from territories overseas in order to compensate for the lack of a domestic labour force in the UK. Considering West Indians alone, for example in 1942, 188 Jamaican volunteers were engaged as engineers in munitions factories of Liverpool, and about 600 Honduran volunteer forestry workers were engaged in the suburbs of Edinburgh, Scotland.¹⁵ The LCP then expanded various support activities so that these wartime volunteer workers from the West Indies could adapt to British society, while also maintaining good race relations with white workers in the workplace. Particularly for Jamaican engineers in Liverpool, because a sizeable community of people of African descent had already formed there, the LCP made Liverpool the base of its activities for people of African descent by proposing to establish a social centre to promote exchange with white people and provided extremely active support activities that included offering funds for its establishment.¹⁶

Incidentally, what allowed the LCP to develop such a range of activities related to racial issues is found in the ever-presence of the extraordinarily passionate and steady efforts it deployed toward finding solutions to these problems. The organisation was constantly on the move in the UK and tried constantly, and as hard as possible, to grasp the situation of people of African descent residing in major cities. In addition, while frequently giving lectures in various places and triggering interest from the general public on racial issues, the LCP was busy trying to gain wide support and

approval for its philosophy and activities. In particular, between July 1943 and March 1944, when he was occupying the elected position of Chairman of the Board of Directors of the London Missionary Society (LMS), Moody engaged in extremely vigorous activities that included traveling no less than ten thousand miles in the UK to report on the current racial situation, as well as spreading the word on the LCP's activities to a wide range of people.¹⁷ It is precisely by sparing no such effort from its executives, with Moody paving the way, that the LCP was able to expand these various activities involving race issues.

The activities for the colonial question

As described in detail in the previous section, the LCP was unequivocally working to eliminate racial issues, or the colour bar more specifically, but with its internal rise to political consciousness in the latter half of the 1930s, its awareness of these issues and activities inevitably expanded again to the colonial question, and in particular, to the issues of self-government and independence.

In September 1935, the LCP adopted a resolution vigorously condemning Italy, which was in the midst of spreading its imperialistic tentacles toward Ethiopia and, in this context, appealed to European countries and the League of Nations, stating that these were pressing times that required consideration of a plan for the future of Africa in which Africa would ultimately and perfectly secure its freedom from any external domination.¹⁸ It then adopted, in March 1938, a resolution about British colonial policy and requested the introduction of free general education in the colonies,

as well as immediate suffrage rights for literate colonial citizens.¹⁹

This growing interest of the LCP in the colonial question was more and more heavily reflected in written documents, such as Moody's messages that were published in the preface of each of the organisation's periodicals. Moody first said, in the May 1941 issue of the organisation's periodical, that the time for injustice and oppression had to end and that the colonial people had to be given full rights of self-determination and freedom.²⁰ Then, in the December 1942 issue, he further wrote down that, for the LCP to discuss the post-war process, it was decided, as a step towards that, to set up a new council within the LCP that would independently tackle the task of safeguarding the interests of the representatives of the African race at the peace conference that would likely be convened in the future. The LCP's reason for trying to set up this council was found in its orchestrated attempts to acquire legitimacy to advocate for a delegation to the peace conference, through reforming itself and evolving into a more open LCP - one that represents the African race - as seen by welcoming, as council members, African people and influential people of African descent who were living in the UK but not yet in the LCP.²¹

The enthusiasm and eagerness of the LCP that attended the peace conference as an organisation defending the interests of the African race, while trying to take part in the making of a new, post-war world order focusing on the emancipation of the colonies, led all at once to its highest point with the adoption of *the Charter for Coloured Peoples* in July 1944. This Charter was adopted for the purpose of complementing the Atlantic Charter, following its joint

declaration in August 1941 by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and United States President Franklin Delano Roosevelt upon their meeting in the Atlantic Ocean, and in which colonies were acknowledged to have the right of self-determination. However, Churchill, nonetheless, later stated that this principle was not intended to guarantee the foundation of autonomous governments in the African and Asian regions.

The Charter for Coloured Peoples set forth two main principles. The first principle stated that all human beings, regardless of race or gender, should enjoy equal rights, and any discrimination was considered illegal and should be punished. The second principle stated that governments with dependent territories under their control should draw up and implement a comprehensive development plan that would contribute to the development of the people, while granting them self-government early, fully, and as much as possible. Then, the LCP requested that States of the United Nations, through their London-based embassies, accept the same Charter as a new starting point for the orderly construction of the post-war world order.²²

Needless to say, for the powerful colonial countries of Europe that were already struggling with a sense of crisis in the shade of the dark clouds of history known as the “downfall of Western Europe”, there was no reason to unconditionally accept a Charter where granting self-government to colonies could mean accelerating their own downfall. Therefore, the Charter disappeared in the great muddy waters of history without producing any direct or substantial achievement. It is, however, possible to clearly sense in the LCP’s

drafting and adoption of the Charter, that the LCP had extraordinary enthusiasm and absolute eagerness to rally the black race and represent its interests. It should also be remembered that the Charter declaration ended up greatly arousing public opinion on the issue of colony emancipation, by going beyond country embassies and getting distributed in all directions, such as to British Members of Parliament, church officials, news organisations, and other organisations of people of African descent.²³

4. Comparison with the WASU

The LCP was tackling two issues, racial and colonial ones, like other similar pan-Africanist organisations of the 1930s-1940s, but it was placing specific emphasis on the former. The LCP had certainly started to advocate political emancipation for colonies, in a context where the organisation had risen to a World War II-triggered political consciousness which eventually led it to adopt a Charter of Coloured Peoples that featured the prompt granting of self-government rights. However, in slight contrast with this colonial emancipation advocacy, the LCP produced few political leaders with a significant impact on later colonial nationalist movements.

In a rather marked contrast to the LCP, the WASU, a quasi-contemporary pan-Africanist organisation based in the UK, listed colonial issues, and more specifically the decolonisation of Africa, over racial ones, as its unequivocal activity target. The organisation also produced a large number of prominent nationalists who later achieved important roles in the emancipation of African colonies,

such as J. B. Danquah (Gold Coast, today's Ghana), Kwame Nkrumah (Gold Coast), H. O. Davies (Nigeria), Jomo Kenyatta (Kenya), Okoi Arikpo (Nigeria), and J.W. de Graft-Johnson (Gold Coast).

The LCP and the WASU both played an undeniable role in fostering a pan-Africanism that advocated unity of Africans and people of African descent, but the real cornerstone of the LCP and WASU's activities had been the "colour question" and the "colonial question", respectively. The main reason for the difference between both organisations' core activities probably lies in their respective founders - the LCP's being a West Indian and the WASU's being a West African.

In British society at the time, West Indians (particularly of Jamaican origin) and West Africans (particularly of Nigerian origin) were the most accounted for people of African descent and Africans, respectively. Both organisations recognised, in no small way, the need for cooperating with each other as one African race and, when negotiating with UK government authorities, frequently dealt with issues together in a cooperative manner. However, despite their racial affinity as people of African descent, there was also a cultural gap between the two that could not be easily swept away.

West Indians, who had been under British colonial rule for a few hundred years, had their way of thinking and their lifestyle was largely anglicised. For example, in the process of long colonial rule, most West Indians had converted to Christianity, and English had deeply permeated people's lives as the official language. For this reason, as they often had a tendency for strong self-assimilation to British culture, only a few recognised themselves as African people.

And, as detailed in the section about Moody's upbringing, the shock of skin colour discrimination that was felt for the first time by those West Indians who had travelled to the UK to study or work was instead far more acute for them than for Africans, because of their very pro-British cultural identity. West Indians in the UK frequently searched for the roots of the problems they were facing in the "colour bar" in British society, and the reason for them to firmly call for its abolition was, above all, linked with the existence of a sort of "twisted relationship" where West Indians were being rejected by British society based on the colour of their skin, despite their cultural identity as British subjects.

In contrast, in West Africa's relatively short history under Britain's colonial rule, the degree of anglicisation was much lower as compared to the West Indies. For example, Christianisation was mostly limited to the coastal zone of West Africa, being blocked by a strong resistance of Islam and local religions; as far as English is concerned, it did not permeate deeply among the common people due to the existence of various tribal languages. In other words, except for a small part of the elite, West Africans did not at the time follow a British way of life or culturally identify as British people. And because many of the West Africans who mainly travelled to the UK to study had a largely different culture from the British one, they were not as sensitive to the existence of the colour bar as West Indians were. Also, as there was a wide gap in lifestyle between West Africans and the British and because they were not as proficient in English as West Indians, they were sort of psychologically "withdrawn" from British society and tended to form

small communities exclusively made up West Africans. Of course, no matter how much one draws a sharp line with the British, West Africans were just as much victims of racial discrimination in British society as were West Indians. However, they would not search for the roots of the problems surrounding racial discrimination within British society like West Indians did, but they would rather attribute them to the subordinate status of motherland Africa to Europe. In other words, for West Africans who were in a “parallel relationship” where there was no room to intersect with British culture, it was thought that the various problems they were facing were not simply due to the colour bar in British society, but rather were essentially deriving from a historical fact that Africa had been subordinated to Europe when it should have been originally treated as an equal.

This different way of thinking, and the actions observed at the time, between West Indians and West Africans, with British society as a sort of medium, is therefore the main factor that explains what led the LCP, made up of West Indians, to focus its main activities on addressing racial issues, and what prompted the WASU, made up of West Africans, to focus its activities on confronting colonial issues.

Moody studied in London, made a name for himself as a general practitioner, married a white woman, and lived permanently there until his death. He was, in that sense, the archetype of a Jamaican immigrant elite of the time who made great efforts to actively “infiltrate” British society. The LCP, which heavily reflected the thoughts and actions of its founder Moody, also rallied West Indians and the part of the African population that was attempting to

“infiltrate” British society in a similar manner, and engaged extensively in activities alleviating the “frictions” of racial discrimination, from such an “infiltration” support perspective.

On the other hand, Solanke, founder of the WASU, was born around 1886 in Southwest Nigeria, started studying law in 1922 in University College London, and was called to the bar in 1926. However, while he founded the WASU on his own initiative, just like Moody had founded the LCP, and continued to live in London for the rest of his life to support the WASU, he did not actively seek to “infiltrate” British society like Moody did. While Moody married a white woman and maintained a close relationship with white society by keeping active in the public sphere as a physician and leader of various British Christian missionary organisations, Solanke married a Nigerian woman and did not actively seek to take part in many social activities in British society, apart from the WASU's. In that sense, understandably, even though Solanke lived in British society, he felt psychologically “withdrawn” from it, just like other West Africans. Also, the WASU's ability to fulfil a crucial role in exalting African nationalism was nothing less than the WASU's extraordinary success, under Solanke's strong leadership, in rallying West African students who wanted to try to “withdraw” from British society and in cohesively mobilizing their young energy to tackle the issue of African colonial emancipation.

Incidentally, while Moody believed in his “service” to the black race, Solanke often appealed for the importance of the “self-help” of Africans.²⁴ One can also notice the emergence of differences between the LCP and the WASU based on Moody and Solanke's respective

beliefs.

In short, the differences in activities between both pan-Africanist organisations in the UK - the LCP and the WASU - were nothing less than the projections of two diverging orientations in British society, “infiltration” and “withdrawal”, that were occurring among people of African descent at the time.

5. Conclusion

In October 1945, the Fifth Pan-African Congress was held in Manchester. This Congress was truly a landmark event, in the sense that the leadership of pan-Africanism had clearly shifted from the hands of intellectuals of African descent outside the African continent to African nationalists, which meant that the tide of the pan-Africanist movement had, in many ways, morphed into huge waves of nationalism in Africa. However, although the LCP had hosted a welcome reception for prominent pan-Africanist W. E. B. DuBois, who was visiting Britain to attend the Congress,²⁵ it eventually did not dispatch a single representative to the Congress itself. The reason for the LCP's absence from the Congress has been attributed to the theory of a personal feud between Moody and radical pan-Africanists who were taking leadership of the Congress, but the authenticity of this theory is not entirely clear (Geiss, 1974: 400-401). However, the only thing that is clear is the fact that Moody was captivated by the realisation of a plan very close to his heart, one that should well be called the climax of his life.

At the LCP's Fourteenth General Meeting in March 1945, Moody called for the need to provide the UK-inbound coloured people with accommodation facilities in anticipation of an increase in the flow of immigrants following the war and to open a cultural centre in London to promote mutual cultural understanding between coloured people and white people. Then, in November 1946, burning with a desire to realise his plan, Moody, accompanied by his wife, set out on a journey to visit the United States and the West Indies, in order to raise the 50,000 pounds in donation funds he needed to open the centre. In addition to visiting New York, during this trip, Moody vigorously visited various countries of the West Indies, such as Jamaica, Trinidad, St. Lucia, Grenada, and Antigua, gave a lot of lectures, and raised donations for the opening of the centre.

However, despite Moody's resolve to open a cultural centre for people of African descent in London, as well as scrambling to procure funds for its realisation, his extraordinary eagerness and efforts eventually never came to fruition. That is because, five months after his trip to the United States and the West Indies began, and after returning to Britain, Moody became bedridden on 14 April 1947. Then, on 24 April 1947, only 10 days after returning home to Britain, Moody quietly passed away at the age of 64.

It is not clear when and how the LCP began to fade away. However, after the death of its founder Moody, the LCP proceeded in the direction of a gradual "de-Moody-sation." Before long, the LCP re-examined the close cooperation with various religious organisations commonly seen during Moody's era, and further evolved by distancing itself from Moody's dialogue-oriented

moderate ideology.²⁶ Then it seems, through this “de-Moody-sation”-oriented organisational reform, that the LCP instead lost a lot of the members whose thoughts and actions had resonated with Moody’s, which would later cause it to gradually stall as an organisation and disappear around 1954 or 1955 (Morris, 1972: 196).

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Notes

- 1 *The Keys*, Vol. I, No. 1, July 1933, p. 2.
- 2 The title of the LCP’s organ changed over time as follows: *The Keys* (from July 1933, quarterly); *LCP Letter*, *News Notes* (from October 1939, monthly); *News Letter News Notes* (April 1940, monthly); *League of Coloured Peoples’ Review* (January 1951).
- 3 *The Keys*, Vol. I, No. 4, April-June 1934, p. 70.
- 4 *The Keys*, Vol. III, No. 4, April-June 1936, p. 52.
- 5 *News Notes*, No. 14, November 1940, p. 31.
- 6 LCP, *Seventh annual report (Year 1937-1938)*, March 1938, p. 2.
- 7 LCP, *Twelfth annual report (Year 1942-1943)*, March 1943, p. 5.
- 8 *The Keys*, Vol. III, No. 4, April-June 1936, p. 52.
- 9 *The Keys*, Vol. II, No. 2, October-December 1934, p. 22.
- 10 *The Keys*, Vol. I, No. 4, April-June 1934, p. 70.
- 11 For example, “The New Hostel: Mysteries Lurking behind Aggrey House,

O! Africans, 'Beware of the Greeks even When They Offer Gifts,'" *West Africa*, 3 February 1934, pp. 109-10; "Aggrey House," *West Africa*, 7 April 1934, pp. 350-351; "Aggrey House," *West Africa*, 28 April 1934, p. 450; West African Students' Union (1934) *The Truth about Aggrey House: An Exposure of the Government Plan for the Control of African Students in Great Britain*, London: WASU.

12 *The Times*, 13 June 1919, p. 9.

13 *The Keys*, Vol. III, No. 4, April-June 1936, p. 53.

14 *News Notes*, No. 23, August 1941, pp. 97-119.

15 *News Notes*, No. 29, February 1942, p. 100.

16 LCP, *Twelfth Annual Report (Year 1942-1943)*, pp. 12-15.

17 LCP, *Thirteenth Annual Report (Year 1943-1944)*, March 1944, p. 5.

18 *The Keys*, Vol. III, No. 3, January-March 1936, p. 31.

19 *The Keys*, Vol. V, No. 4, April-June 1938, p. 85.

20 *News Letter*, No. 20, May 1941, p. 31.

21 *News Letter*, No. 39, December 1942, p. 68.

22 For the further detail of the Charter for Coloured Peoples, see *News Notes*, August 1944, No. 59, p. 73.

23 *News Notes*, No. 60, September 1944, p. 86.

24 For example, see Solanke, L. (1925) "West African Land and Self-development: To the Editor of West Africa," *West Africa*, 4 April, p. 311.

25 *News Notes*, No. 75, December 1945, p. 61.

26 *News Letter*, No. 102, pp. 59-61.

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